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ourselves free from the tyranny of words, and claim the legitimacy, when we require it, of changing the interpretation of the words of the symbol."¹

In furtherance of his aim Professor Ross interprets the "I believe in" of the Creed not as an expression of intellectual assent but as a thrice-repeated act of self-committal. "'I commit myself to God' (who is thereupon described in terms fitted to stimulate confidence); next, 'I commit myself to Jesus' (who is thereupon described in terms of selected points in character, origin, and career); finally, 'I commit myself to the Holy Ghost' (who is described in terms of certain of His operations in human society)."²

Professor Ross insists that the real meaning of any article is not the idea its words may convey to us, nor even the idea as originally expressed by its framers; but it is the thought underlying the original expression. Thus he holds that the religious worth of the phrase, "conceived by the Holy Ghost," is that "it emphasizes the responsibility of God for all that Jesus from the beginning was."³ This important canon of interpretation he applies with uniformly reverent handling and a deep insight into human experience and the Divine character; though his treatment of the different articles is not likely to be regarded as equally satisfactory.

The punctuation of the book is often poor. Capital letters (page 53) make a statement refer to Jesus which can only have reference to St. John. The essay will not satisfy one who conceives that his use of the Creed must be limited to the literal meaning of the words before him. But to one who is restless until he has grasped the underlying meaning, the book will furnish food for thought, trustworthy guidance, and the inspiration which comes in face of deep things.

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LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI. FATHER CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C. Longmans, Green, & Co. 1913. Pp. xii, 446.

Since Paul Sabatier's *Vie de S. François d'Assise* was crowned by the French Academy and awarded the Guérin prize twenty years ago, a host of Franciscan scholars—Boehmer, Goetz, Paschal Robinson, Père Alençon, Lemmons, Little, Van Ortroty, Ehrle, to mention but a few—have been at work in every nook and corner of Europe to discover the least scrap of testimony that could throw light on the life and teachings of the most popular saint of the Roman calendar. Father Cuthbert has studied the vast deposit of Fran-

¹ P. 14.

² P. 19.

³ P. 69.

ciscana with great diligence and thoroughness, and has given us the most delightfully written life of the *Poverello* that has appeared since Sabatier's. The author confesses that the new material found in the last score of years, like Celano's *Tractus de Miraculis* and the better texts of the *Opuscula*, has not brought to light many facts or sayings that "have not been in some way recognized in the hitherto accepted story of the saint"; but he nevertheless thinks this new material of great value in enabling us to set the facts and teachings of Saint Francis' life in clearer sequence and more authentic relations to his age and time.

The most conspicuous result of the newer discoveries, and one which Father Cuthbert himself confesses is unexpected, is the testimony which the new documents bring to the essential truth of the popular conceptions of Saint Francis. Critical study has generally shattered popular ideals. But in this case, says Cuthbert, "the wider our knowledge of the sources of the Franciscan story becomes, the more accurate appears that traditional estimate of Francis, which has been kept sacred in the people's mind through all the ages since he lived" (page 418).

This is really the text of Father Cuthbert's biography of Saint Francis. The book is a most faithful and fascinating work of piety, in which the author openly and sometimes almost ecstatically rejoices in the wealth of documentary evidence confirming his vision (already amply confirmed by faith) of the *Poverello* of Assisi. On almost every page of Father Cuthbert's work the adoring disciple is visible. Sabatier's book is that of a sympathetic brother of Saint Francis, rejoicing in his limitless charity and unqualified humanity; Father Cuthbert's is the proud vindication of Saint Francis as the father of the strictest of the communities bearing his name, and the guardians of the *Portiuncula*, the most sacred spot in the Franciscan legend. For Father Cuthbert is a Capuchin.

It is this enthusiastic discipleship that gives Father Cuthbert's work both its strong and its weak points. The glow of conviction in it, joined to a delightful narrative style and a fine feeling for the beauties of nature and human character, gives the book a charm which is sustained from the beginning to the end. In this respect the book is worthy to stand beside the remarkable work of the French scholar. But at the same time, one feels the dangers attendant on this ardor of discipleship.

In the first place, the treatment of Saint Francis is too intimate. The author again and again presumes to read the mind of Francis and his companions, to assign them motives, to attribute to them

feelings, which they may or may not have had. He tells what Saint Francis' thoughts were on leaving Rome after the reception of Pope Innocent III (page 92), pronounces on the sincerity of a sermon (page 175), knows of the influence of romantic chivalry on the Saint (page 273), analyzes the workings of his mind when confronted by a condition requiring action (page 394). In all this Father Cuthbert uses categorical language. If pressed for its justification, he would have to confess that, while consonant with the sources we have of the Saint's life, it runs beyond them in its enthusiastic desire to know his inmost thoughts.

The same enthusiastic devotion seems to us somewhat to mislead Father Cuthbert in the use of his sources. He has mastered the abundant sources and literature on Saint Francis with rare diligence. There is nothing to be desired in the *amount* of documentation that Father Cuthbert adduces. But when it comes to the discrimination of his sources we feel that the author is weak. He heaps up instances instead of weighing testimony. One gets the impression that all the mediaeval legends of the Saint are of equal value, and that any reference to him is sacred *because* it is a reference to him. Whether an event is related in the biographies of Celano, or the Three Companions, or the *Speculum Perfectionis*, or the *Conformitates*, or the *Fioretti*, it is accepted with apparently "equal thanks." So all the trivial miracles of the legends are told (pages 116, 140, 210, 212, etc.), with no attempt at all to probe their origin, with no apparent doubt of their perfect actuality; the "critical" effort of the author being exhausted in placing them in their correct setting in the Saint's life. What can we think of the scientific attitude of a mind that can treat the wolf of Gubbio episode as Father Cuthbert does on page 164! The legend of the taming of the wolf by the courageous exhortation of Francis comes to us as a charming allegory from the *Fioretti*. Father Cuthbert finds "two curious supports for its substantial authenticity" in recent years: one the discovery of the *Passio S. Verecundi*, which "puts it beyond doubt that Francis came to Gubbio at a time when the country was being ravaged by hungry wolves" (as if the legend could have any other source!), and the other, that a wolf's skull was found embedded beneath the ancient walls of the church of San Francisco della Pace in Gubbio (as if the legend could have any likelier result!). These discoveries are about as substantial an authentication of the miracle of the wolf as the demonstration that they had ovens to bake bread in in Galilee, or that there was an abundance of fish in the Lake, would be a substantiation of the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

Again, in his enthusiasm for the beloved Saint Father Cuthbert makes his influence so great at the very beginning of his preaching career (1210) that it was by Francis' sermons that the alliance of Majores and Minors in Assisi was accomplished (in spite of the contempt with which the families of the rich looked on this insane young man who had deserted their ranks to lead a life of evangelical poverty); although Father Cuthbert naïvely adds in the next paragraph: "It may be that the presence of the emperor's forces almost at their gates had something to do in bringing about this act of civic concord." The reader acquainted with the mediaeval history of the northern Italian towns will judge whether the preaching of Saint Francis or the presence of Otto IV's German troops had most to do with the temporary promotion of civic concord in Assisi.

With Father Cuthbert's acceptance of all the miracles of Saint Francis and of his disciples we cannot quarrel. There is absolutely no ground for argument between those who accept miracles and those who do not; for the reason that the documentation of miracles is also offered by those who accept them. But it gives one a curious feeling of the limitations of "scientific" scholarship to find Saint Anthony of Padua's miracle of attracting the fishes, which flocked to the shore like the oysters in *Alice in Wonderland*, soberly handled a few pages away from the keen analysis of the *Regula prima* and an exhaustive sifting of the relations of the Third Order to the original Franciscan community. On the treatment of the miraculous, then, we will not enter; it being to us also, in spite of the withering scorn of Father Cuthbert, "a more plausible theory that Saint Francis, to ease the itching of his body, scratched the wounds in hands, feet, and side," than that they were imprinted there by the seraphic rays from the vision on Monte Alvernia.

The chapters on Francis at the Fourth Lateran Council (Book II, chapter 6), on Brother Elias (Book III, chapter 5), and on the Third Order (Book III, chapter 6), seem to us particularly good, although a high standard of literary excellence is maintained from cover to cover. Once make allowance for the rather distorting influence of the author's personal devotion to Saint Francis as an impeccable father, and of his acceptance of the miraculous wherever it testifies to the enhancement of Francis' glory, and the book is a most delightful piece of work. Its charm of style is increased by the inclusion of a dozen beautiful full-page half-tones representing the scenes of the saint's labors and devotions.

DAVID SAVILLE MUZZEY.

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